

Bear with the Word of Exhortation

Hebrews 13:22

Halifax: 15 September 2024

Introduction:

We are almost at the end of the epistle to the Hebrews.

- In the introductory sermon to this epistle, I pointed you to the verse that we are looking at today: Hebrews 13:22.
- I did that because it tells us what this letter, this epistle, is all about.

Listen as I read these words to you now. It is Hebrews 13:22.

- This is the holy word of God:

Hebrews 13:22: And I appeal [*parakaleo*] to you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation [*paraklesis*], for I have written [a letter—*epistello*] to you in few words.

Thus far the reading of God's Word.

You can see that the author considers his entire letter to be a brief word of exhortation.

I. Let's begin by considering the words and their general meaning.

A. **Exhortation.** I will begin with the main word.

1. *Paraklesis* is the Greek word. It means to put a call (*klesis*) beside you (*para*).
 - The call refers to words of helpfulness that are meant to push you along in the right direction.
2. They can be words of comfort, warning, arousal to get you going, instruction, restraint, correction, counsel, rebuke, encouragement—whatever is needed.
 - It is a wonderful word about a wonderful thing.
 - The Holy Spirit is called the *Paraklete*—helper, counsellor, exhorter—because this is what He does, He brings the word of truth to bear upon us.

B. **Bear with.**

1. This word means to tolerate, to put up with, to maintain and keep, to endure.
 - This is what we are to do with the words of exhortation—we are to hold on to them.
2. It suggests difficulty—the words annoy us because they push us along, or they push us in a direction that we do not want to go.

C. **I appeal to you brethren** is itself an exhortation (*parakaleo*—the verbal form).

1. The author is pushing along here to be willing to be pushed along by his letter.
2. Note the love in these words.
 - He is pleading with us (exhorting) because he knows these words will help us.
 - He calls us brethren because we are dear.

TRANS> The issue here is that, being sinners, we do not always want God's word of exhortation (helpfulness), and sometimes don't even think it is best for us.

- Usually, we really know that it is best, but at the moment we don't want to hear it.
- That is the very time that you need to hear the call to bear the word of exhortation.

II. What are the words of helpfulness that are found in this epistle to the Hebrews?

- **It can be boiled down to two overlapping categories:**

- A. Words that push us to believe in the superior excellence of Christ.
1. In Hebrews 8:1-2, the author tells us that this is his main point.
 - After seven chapters of presenting us with the excellencies of Christ, he says, (Heb 8:1-2): **“Now *this is the main point of the things we are saying*: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the true sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected and not man.”**
 - Then he goes on with more about Christ’s supremacy for two and half chapters.
 2. Remember some of the things it says?
 - In the opening verse, we are told that He is God’s ultimate word to us—His word of salvation—who purged our sin and sat down to reign until He makes all His enemies His footstool.
 - He is the truth. He is our salvation. He is God’s word to us. Bear this. Don’t let it loose.
 - We must bear the truth, and that He is superior to all the angels—it is only to Him that God said, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.”
 - The devil will want you to question His authority.
 - Don’t do it. Bear with the word that He reigns.
 - In chapter 2, we are told that we must hear Him or we cannot be saved... that as one of us, He was exalted to the place we were created to have—with all creation under our feet.
 - Bear with this word of exhortation—you will not gain dominion by riches and success in this world. Seek the things that are above where Christ is.
 - We are told that as the captain of our salvation, He leads us to God, He was made everything we need Him to be by suffering—He became not an angel but a man that He might turn away God’s wrath toward our sin by bearing it.
 - Bear with this truth when deceivers and the devil tell you that God is angry with you and cannot be appeased—in Jesus there is forgiveness.
 - We are told that He is superior to Moses—as the LORD who builds us into a house for God—Moses told us what had to be done, but Jesus does it.
 - When you are discouraged, this word reminds you that He is building and will build His church.
 - Don’t look at that as impossible.
 - We are told that He is the one, the only one, who can bring us into God’s rest unless we harden our hearts, refusing to bear the word of the gospel!
 - Bear that word of truth, not Satan’s word that salvation is out of reach for you. It is not out of reach in Christ our priest. He has already entered God’s rest. Don’t harden your heart as if He cannot save you.
 - At the end of chapter 4, we are told that He is the Son of God, but also a priest with true compassion who can sympathise with our weakness because He was tempted in every way that we are and never gave in. We know how to fall, but He knows how to stand.

- To bear with the word would mean that you go to Him in your need and refuse to believe the lie of Satan that He cannot understand what you are going through.
 - Why do you look elsewhere for your help? Bear the word of exhortation.
 - We are told that He was called by God to be a priest and was confirmed by God to be our priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.
 - He did not appoint Himself.
 - Don't let men who dress up as priests deceive you. They were not called to be priests to offer sacrifices for sin. He is the only one.
 - At the end of chapter 6, He is called the anchor—the one who tethers us to God on His eternal throne in heaven. He is the priest who is the forerunner—going there to stay as the one who will bring us along after.
 - Don't act and live as though you have no future. Bear with this word of exhortation about Him. Keep it when this life is hurting you as well as when it is enticing you.
 - In chapter 7, we are told that Christ is superior to Levi—that Levi actually paid tithes to Him in Abraham—
 - That earthly rituals cannot provide what we need, only Jesus who procured our salvation before God in heaven.
 - Bear the word that He—and He only—is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God by Him.
 - In chapter 8, He is presented as the priest who has brought us into a better covenant—where there is true forgiveness and hope, where there is full transformation of sinners by His Spirit who works in us.
 - Bear this word of exhortation—come to Him resting in full forgiveness and expecting to be transformed.
 - In chapter 9, we are told that He has the sacrifice that takes away our sin—that it is the offering of Himself to suffer for our sins.
 - We are told that God appointed this and that God has accepted this.
 - Don't look to your works or to someone else's; look to His saving work on the cross.
3. This is what you need to see constantly as a Christian.
- That in Christ you have the priest that you need.
 - He is the priest who can save to the uttermost those who come to God by Him.
- What are the words of exhortation that fall into the second category?
- B. Words that push us to follow Him with faith and obedience in times of opposition.
1. The second exhortation can be summed up like this: **Live your life looking to Jesus.**
 - **Heb 12:1-2: Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**
 2. This exhortation is simple.

- Since we have a priest who can save us from our sins, then start looking to Him to actually be saved from your sin.
 - There is complete forgiveness from this priest who has atoned for our sin, but there is also ongoing salvation in which we run to God spiritually to live in harmony with Him.
3. There are many examples of this too.
- We were told to take heed to the word of truth brought to us by the apostles. How can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?
 - Don't ignore this exhortation.
 - In chapter 3-4, we are exhorted to guard ourselves from growing hard so that we do not enter into God's rest.
 - We start to complain and then we refuse to trust Him.
 - In chapters 5 and 6, we were warned against being lazy in the ears... not willing to exert ourselves to understand anything beyond the milk so that we never go on to maturity.
 - There follows that fearful exhortation against turning away from the truth that we know so that it becomes impossible to renew us to repentance.
 - Bear this exhortation. Actually do it.
 - In chapter 10, we are exhorted to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is.
 - Bear this exhortation. Heed it.
 - Chapter 11 is full of the examples of those who live by faith—the exhortation is to follow their example and live based on what God has said instead of by what we see going on or by own sinful desires.
 - We should be willing to suffer in this world because we know that God is good and that He will keep His promise to give us our reward in time.
 - We need to bear this word when it seems like His promises are not being fulfilled and everything is falling apart.
 - Chapter 12, after the primary call to run the race looking unto Jesus, tells us not to be discouraged when we are chastened.
 - You need that word of exhortation when you are being chastened—God is doing this you because He loves you as His child.
 - You are exhorted not to let your hands hang down—to become weary and discouraged.
 - And then in chapter 13, we have all of these exhortations to brotherly love...
 - Reaching out to strangers, remembering prisoners, living in marriage according to God's directives and in sexual purity, avoiding covetousness and ritual shadow worship.
 - We are to go on professing the gospel and worshipping biblically even when we are looked down on and reproached by the world and branches of the church.
 - We are to bring God the sacrifices of praise and of service to others, not neglecting either one as we may be tempted to do.

- We are to submit to our leaders and to pray for them and others.

TRANS> So we have these very helpful words to push us along in the right direction.

III. The reality is that there are times when God’s helpful words are irritating to you—you do not want to be pushed along in the right direction.

A. Do you know what will make the biggest difference in your life?

1. It is when you learn to *bear with* the word of exhortation at *those* times.
 - You know, when the word rubs you, crosses you, irritates you so that you don’t want to hear it. That is the very time you need it most and your life won’t really change until you start bearing it whenever it comes to change you!
 - That is the Spirit coming. Don’t resist Him. Bear the exhortation.
 - Instead of going by your feelings, you bear the word of exhortation.
 - Instead of following your lusts, you bear the word of exhortation.

➤ Start doing that, and you will know what it is for God to transform your life! Could this be the reason that you are not growing and that your life with God is cold and unfruitful?
2. Think about it. You don’t change at all unless you accept God’s word so that it changes your way of thinking and acting.
 - a. When your mind and your thinking are not right, bear the word of exhortation.
 - The word of exhortation is supposed to renew your mind—the way you look at God and your life and your place in the world, your purpose.
 - When you are anxious and then you remember the word of exhortation that Jesus is on the throne, ruling over all. Your mind is renewed to trust God instead of living in despair.
 - When you look at your life, see your sin, and feel hopeless and like giving up—the word of exhortation points you to Jesus our high priest who offered the sacrifice you need for pardon. Don’t push away the word of exhortation.
 - When you are feeling sorry for yourself and shut up in your own down spiralling thoughts thinking that nobody cares about you—bear the word of exhortation that tells you that you have a High Priest who cares.
 - When you are full of envy because other people have something you don’t—and you want to deny that it is envy—that you are just sad...
 - But your envy keeps you from ministering to those people.
 - Will you then follow your feelings and say, “It is too hard, I can’t minister to these people,” or will you bear the word of exhortation that tells you that you have an inheritance in heaven with Christ that surpasses whatever you might have in this world?
 - b. When your behaviour is not right, bear the word of exhortation.

- When you want to livestream instead of going to worship and the word exhorts you go and worship God—and you bear the exhortation. You go.
- When you need to correct your child and you don't want to bother—and the word of exhortation confronts you.
- When you need to pray, but you want to look at your news feed instead. Bear the word of exhortation.
- When you are angry and you want to vent your spleen—bear the word of exhortation.

B. Bear the word of exhortation at all times.

1. Bear it urgently in the moment of testing and temptation.
 - When you are David and you see Bathsheba bathing and you want her... bear with the word of temptation.
 - When you are at church and you start to focus on whether people like you or not... Remember that you have a high priest who loves you forever and who wants you to focus on loving others.
2. Bear it consistently in the ordinary times—the mundane.
 - You must keep on clinging to it in the everyday affairs of life so that you don't grow negligent—keeping up your praise and thanksgiving to God (how is that going? Are you learning to adore Him and to tell Him so?)
 - And keeping brotherly love going—letting it continue—the sacrifice of doing good and sharing what you have from God.
3. Bear it patiently in the long haul—when you have trials that go on and on.
 - When you are afflicted and the affliction remains.
 - That is when you need the word of exhortation that tells you to run the race looking until Jesus... looking for the prize that He promises.
4. Bear it when you want to say: “But I’m not like that.” “That’s not my personality,” or “not my love language.”
 - Hebrews tells us that Christ came to make us complete.
 - If you are a hard-driving kind of person, bear the word that also calls you to be tender-hearted. Jesus was both. He makes us complete. Look to Him.
 - If you are tender-hearted, don't ignore the word of exhortation to bear hard things and to persevere without wavering.
 - So you feel things more deeply? Guess what? So did Jesus! Much more deeply than you do! Yet He persevered through the most difficult times.
 - If you are just easy going, that's nice, but you must learn to bear the word that tells you to hate sin and to rebuke sin, to confront those who are in error.
 - “It's just not me.” That's right. That's the problem. Jesus came to transform us and make us complete.
 - If you like to be thought well of, you have to bear the word that tells you to bear the reproach of Christ.

- If you couldn't care less what other people think of you, you need to bear the word that tells you to be a godly example, to be salt and light and an example of love.

C. Everything comes together in Christ.

1. The primary exhortation is to keep looking to Him as the priest that is yours.
 - The exhortation is to have Him—have all of Him who came for your salvation.
2. He is the one who says “Take, eat, this is my body given for you. This cup is the New Covenant in my blood, shed for the remission of the sins of many.”
 - “Have all of me.”
 - The exhortation is to trust in this great high priest and to obtain life by Him.
 - Bear with the word of exhortation. Bear with it always. He will transform you. There is no priest like Him.